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SHERWIN'S  
**Weekly Political Register.**

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PROGRESS OF EMIGRATION.

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“Emigration is still the order of the day at Plymouth Dock and its neighbourhood. Several of the vessels that have sailed had from 100 to 120 souls on board. A farmer from Botesfleming, in Devon, with his wife and 10 children, are amongst the emigrants. There were besides several families, of 5 or 6 children. Some excellent workmen have departed, and among them a few from the Dock-yard. It is supposed that not fewer than 1,000 persons have sailed for America from Plymouth during the season. Quere, how many will emigrate during 1819 from the different ports of the United Kingdom?”---TIMES, April 22nd.

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IN my last number I took occasion to notice the “progress of pauperism;” in the present it may not be improper to bestow a little attention on, at least, *one* of the effects of this alarming revolution in the prosperity of the People. Though we may not have the power to remove the evils, or redress the wrongs which have been heaped upon us, we have still the privilege of *complaining* of our injuries, we have still the liberty to express our *detestation* of the conduct of our oppressors, we have still the power to hold them up to the execrations of the country and the contempt of the world at large.

There is scarcely any subject which has excited a greater interest, or which has occasioned more enquiry, than that of emigration. The subject has been so completely forced upon the public mind that we shall find very few individuals amongst the thinking part of mankind who have not given it their consideration. The whole community, whether high or low, rich or poor,—those who have lost their all, and those who having only been deprived of a part, have still something left to lose, seem to have entered into the subject, and with very few exceptions appear to be generally agreed on the policy of the measure. Some objections have indeed, been urged against the propriety of a “free-born

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Englishman" seeking that freedom and happiness in a foreign land which appears to be effectually banished from his own : but these objections have had but little weight with a race of men who think they have a right to enjoy the sweets of liberty, plenty, and social intercourse, wherever they can find them. The tide of emigration still rolls on in spite of the false assertions and false reasoning of its opposers, and must inevitably continue to do so, unless the will of Providence, or the interference of the People, should almost work a miracle in the affairs of the country.

It is almost superfluous to enter into an examination of the causes which have thus impelled our countrymen to seek refuge on the shores of a foreign land. A great pressure of public calamity, produced by a long series of misrule, together with the inviting prospect of a country which promises to be free from these evils for ages to come, may be classed as the principal causes of the influx of Europeans, and of Englishmen in particular, on the western shores of the Atlantic. It has been frequently and truly observed, that this is an *age* of revolutions; for if this were not the case, we might be surprised at the great and important change which has taken place as far as relates to the subject of emigration. There *was* a time when *Britain* was regarded as the asylum of the oppressed, the persecuted, and the destitute,—when a slave no sooner set his foot on our soil than he became a freeman; but our country no longer retains the marks of this glorious distinction. The Goddess of Liberty, and her attendants, Plenty and protection, have been driven from the civilized nations of Europe, and have sought refuge in the wildernesses of North America. These are melancholy truths, but they are truths, and it is the duty of every man to expose them. The subject is one in which almost every Englishman is interested, and, therefore, it is right that it should be thoroughly and fairly investigated. This cannot be done by garbled statements, or partial examinations.

There cannot be any thing more uncongenial to the human mind than the idea of compulsory exile. It is worse than the endurance of the greatest privations at home. The thought of being torn from our homes, of being severed from our friends, and from the spot of our birth by the hand of violence, is one from which we recoil with no ordinary share of unpleasantness in our feelings. Whatever difficulties may threaten our country, or whatever dangers may surround it, we still feel that *it is our country*, we see a thousand endearing objects which before were unknown to



us, and we cling to them with all the force of natural affection. But when the same thing is presented to us under other circumstances, it assumes quite a different appearance. When the question is put, whether will you continue in a country which has already nearly involved you in ruin, and which appears to be fraught with no other consequences; or, will you become a voluntary exile to a land where want and misery are unknown?—it is almost impossible to avoid expressing a desire to relinquish the former and adopt the latter. I am well aware of the maxims and lessons which have been held forth on the subject of what is termed love of country, but these are things which it is much more pleasant to preach than to practice. A man may *love his country*, but that is no rule for his remaining in it when there is no prospect of his being able to better its condition, and when, by removing from it, he may better *his own*. There certainly is not much patriotism; and I think there is a great lack of prudence, in a person suffering himself quietly to be oppressed and ruined, while there is a country on earth well stored with the comforts of plenty, and blessed with the advantages of liberty, that invites him to her bosom.

This is not exaggerating matters. I assert, without fear of contradiction, that thousands of respectable individuals and their families have been reduced to a state of absolute ruin, who, by removing a few years ago to a country less burthened with taxes, and vexatious impositions, might, at the present moment, have been living in a state of affluence. They have trifled away their time from year to year; they have seen and felt their property progressively decreasing; but with this before their eyes, they have still clung to their country in the hope that things would take a turn for the better. The consequence of their misplaced confidence in the management of their rulers has been a regular but rapid diminution in the quantity of their property, until they and their families have been absolutely ruined.

The evils of want and oppression at home have one advantage, they have, in a great measure, the effect of curing themselves. They drive men to think of a remedy, and the world would, indeed, be in a deplorable condition if a remedy for such grievous afflictions were not to be found. It is of no use to censure men for adopting the remedy; they will continue to use it as long as they are suffered to do so. Indeed, what is a man who happens to be possessed of a little property to do? Suppose he has a wife and

three or four children, is he to sit patiently at home, to see the little earnings and hoardings of years taken away by a trifle at a time, until he has nothing left? Is he to see his little heap carried away piece-meal, without making a single effort to retain even a portion of it for his children? A man's situation in this case is extremely difficult. For many reasons he may feel attached to England; he may reverence the wisdom of his ancestors, he may admire the justice and excellence of the laws, when administered in their original purity; he may feel a thousand local attachments, and as many national prejudices, but when he turns from these to an amiable wife and a rising family, whose welfare he knows is every day becoming more precarious, his attachments wither into coldness, or sink into disgust, and his prejudices brought into contact with his interest, become the destroyers of his happiness and the bane of his repose. He sickens at the praises of a country which no longer affords him a suitable reward for his industry; and it is no wonder that he should think of spending the remainder of his days in a more favourable clime. Indeed, this is his only resource; for if he remains quietly at home, want, penury, and the workhouse are his inevitable doom; and if he dares to grumble, the walls of a prison are his only portion.

As for those persons who would recommend the Parliament to put a stop to emigration by severe enactments, their unfeeling, unprincipled conduct need only be noticed to be reprobated. There is neither policy nor justice in such recommendations. What right has the Parliament to control the inclinations of those persons, who from whatever motive or cause, may wish to leave the country? Mankind have a right to pursue their happiness in any way they please, so long as they shall do it without injury to their fellow-men. The barbarous idea of confining citizenship to the soil "like vegetation," is one which ought to be blotted out of the creed of civilized countries. It is a relic of savage life, and a disgrace to all who disclaim the title of barbarians. The only mode of rendering the circle of civilization complete, is by the promotion of universal intercourse, and universal citizenship. It is not because a man happens to be born in England, that he ought to be miserable; the accident of birth is no crime, and, therefore it ought not to be visited as a misfortune. It is a principle inherent in human nature that mankind have a right to seek happiness wherever they can find it, and the man that would recom-



mend this right to be restricted is a sycophant, and the Government that would adopt such a recommendation is a despotism.

Having glanced at the right as well as the policy of emigration, I will now offer a few remarks on the *detail* part of the subject, (if the term may be allowed) and this cannot be done better than by a brief notice of the principal works in which the propriety of the measure has been investigated.

I begin with Mr. Birkbeck. The character of this gentleman is well known to the public. As a kind-hearted, benevolent man; as a zealous and determined friend of liberty, whether civil or religious, as a respectable English farmer, and as a man of considerable literary talent and extensive information, his reputation stood very high, before his departure from this country. From his known character and principles, it was natural to expect from his pen an able exposition of the arguments for and against the propriety of emigration. To a certain extent this expectation has been gratified by the two works which he has lately published, but to an accurate observer these works must appear to contain a variety of errors, and however we may be inclined to approve of Birkbeck's general conduct and principles, it is impossible not to perceive that he has fallen into a variety of errors. It is a most mischievous and absurd idea to suppose that the mistakes of a good man ought to be respected; on the contrary, they ought most scrupulously to be exposed, for the better the character of the man, the more are his mis-statements calculated to produce present delusion and future disappointment.

We are compelled to admire the enthusiasm of Mr. Birkbeck in favour of the principles of liberty, though we must regret the errors which this enthusiasm appears to have occasioned. The warmth of his heart seems to have gained an ascendancy over the steadiness of his judgment, and though his statements have generally truth for their foundation, they are given in such language and accompanied with such reflections, that their effect is tantamount to that of falsehood. The first production of Mr. Birkbeck on this subject is, his *Notes on a Journey from Virginia to Illinois*. In these "Notes" the character of the Americans and of their country is delineated with an acuteness and simplicity of language which is truly admirable: the accounts which he gives of the rising greatness of the people, of the rapid increase of their towns, both in size and number, are so truly

astonishing, that they are scarcely to be believed. These wonderful circumstances, he, in a great measure, attributes to the nature of the American Government, which, instead of depriving the labourer of his hire and the farmer of his profits, dispenses protection and encouragement to both, as the only means of increasing the prosperity, population, improvement, and independence of the country. After describing in the most forcible terms the astonishing progress which is continually making in every direction throughout the immense territory which he traversed, he makes the following observations :

“ Cincinnati is, however, a most thriving place, and backed as it is already by a great population and a most fruitful country, bids fair to be one of the first cities of the west. We are told, and we cannot doubt the fact, that the chief of what we see is the work of four years. The hundreds of commodious, well-finished brick houses, the spacious and busy markets, the substantial public buildings, the thousands of prosperous well-dressed, industrious inhabitants, the numerous waggons and drays, the gay carriages and elegant females ;—the shoals of craft on the river, the busy stir prevailing every where, houses building, boat building, paving and levelling streets ; the numbers of country people, constantly coming and going, with the spacious taverns, crowded with travellers from a distance.

“ All this is so much more than I could comprehend, from a description of a new town, just risen from the woods, that I despair of conveying an adequate idea of it to my English friends. It is enchantment, and Liberty is the fair enchantress.”

This is only a specimen of what is going on, a specimen which could scarcely be credited, if we were not acquainted with the character of the author, and if we did not know that the friends of arbitrary power in this country were ever upon the watch to detect and expose the mistakes or misstatements of any one who may be suspected of hostility towards their views.

- One of the principal errors which Mr. Birkbeck's “ Notes” are calculated to correct, is the erroneous impression which has too long prevailed on this side the water respecting the manners and behaviour of the American people towards strangers. He does not pretend that a traveller need expect the crawling sycophancy which is to be met with amongst the refinements of Europe ; the reason of which is, that a man in America is from his birth instructed in the dignity which naturally belongs to his character—the extremes of tyranny and slavery are alike unknown, and the consequence is, that service and recompence become reciprocal, and the



is not for me to say, it rests on the word of the person who sent the information, and I give it as I received it, without comment. If the reader believes it, all other explanation will be superfluous, the transaction is as clear as words and proofs can make it, and it would be much better if Mr. Wooler, instead of making useless attempts to defend himself, would endeavour to recover the articles, and deliver them to the right owner. This would be no apology for the act, but it would in some degree repair the injury.

T. W. S.

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## STOCKPORT UNION.

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*Declaration of the Object and Principles of The Union formed at Stockport, in October, 1818, for the Promotion of Human Happiness; with the Rules for conducting the same.—“ Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.”*

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### DECLARATION, &c.

REVIEWING with heartfelt regret the ill-spent years of our history; and beholding, particularly of late, the constant and rapid decrease of public morals; from which proceed the mockeries now so common of religious worship—the wicked administration of both public and private justice—the abuse of every thing intended by the munificent Creator, for the comfort and happiness of his creatures—the oppression, slavery, and cruelty that every where abound—the incessant endeavour to instil into the mind of the rising generation sentiments and opinions, not only contrary to nature, but prejudicial to the freedom and well-being of community, and which must finally end in the discomfiture and ruin of all:—in fine, seeing that the greatest suffering and affliction, both of body and mind, have not only existed for years past, but have now (in a period of profound peace) arrived at a pitch of severity never before equalled, and with no other prospect before us, but a continuance, if not an *increase*, of woes; and believing that all the evils we endure arise from, and are the effects of, a bad system of morals, taught by ignorant, inexperienced pretenders to wisdom and virtue, who are nursed and cherished by a sordid Aristocracy and corrupt system of Government: Therefore we, who subscribe to the following rules, being desirous of commencing an Establishment which will effect a better order of society,

do determine and resolve to unite with all friends and fellow-citizens who will join us in promoting human happiness generally; taking for our motto and constant guide, the universal maxim of "Doing unto others as we would they should do unto us." For these reasons we do solemnly declare, in the presence of the Supreme Being, that we will adhere to this principle; and by these Rules endeavour to obtain legally our Rights as Men and Citizens.

RESOLVED,

1st. That "men are born, and always continue free, and equal in respect of their natural rights. Civil distinctions; therefore, can be founded only on public utility.

2nd. "The most essential end of all moral and political associations is, the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; and these rights are, liberty, protection of property, security, and resistance to oppression."

3rd. The sole real sovereignty of the state is necessarily in the People or Nation; because on earth a Nation hath no *superior*. This alone is *literally* a sovereignty, as being underrived, inherent, and absolute.\*

4th. For promoting the object of the Union, it is requisite that the Town and its immediate vicinity be divided into 12 Sections or Districts; each Section to elect two General Committee-men, as follows:—A requisition to be sent to each Section, for the purpose of calling a Meeting to *nominate* Candidates, when within eight days afterwards the Section should meet again to elect their Committee-men; each member to write the person's name he votes for upon a slip of paper, roll it up, and drop it into a box provided for that purpose; then the votes shall be examined, and whoever has a majority shall be declared duly elected. Each General Committee-man to be not less than 21 years of age, and resident in the town not less than 2 years; and to reside in the Section they severally represent: their duty shall be, to transact all business conjointly with, and at, the regular Meetings of the General Committee, pursuant to the general

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\* That power which is confided to the Parliament, is only *figuratively* a sovereignty; being not inherent, but derived from the People; not absolute, but a mere trust limited to an end; and is only *called* a sovereignty, because in the *office* of making laws and controlling executive power, it hath *no superior*.

And that power which is confided to the King, still more subordinate, as dependent both on the People and the Parliament, is merely *called* a sovereignty, because in the executing of law, the King hath *no superior*.



or particular instructions they may severally receive from their respective Sections;—one half to go out of office every three months.

5th. That a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary, shall be appointed from and by the General Committee; the President and Vice-President to continue in office one week, to be appointed by rotation as their names stand on the list of the General Committee; the Treasurer and Secretary to continue in office during the pleasure of the Committee.

6th. That a place or places shall be forthwith provided, for the purpose of Lecturing, Reading, Conversation, &c.; also for teaching the rising community, not merely the use of letters and words, but such good and moral principles as may lead the *will* to the practice of the great Laws of God, that man may live in harmony with his fellow and with all creation.

7th. All members of the Union shall be divided or classed, with 12 members to each class; they shall elect a leader from amongst themselves every three months: every class shall meet once every week at the house of the leader or some other of the members of the class, or at the Union Rooms, as may be most convenient to them, for the purpose of reading any political or other books, papers, &c. &c. or conversing upon the best practical mode, according to the exigency of the time, of obtaining a free and good Government, which is the primary and principal step to the attainment of human happiness. Each member shall pay weekly to his class-leader, at the time of meeting, one penny, for the purpose of carrying into effect the object of the Union; viz. that of obtaining *Political Liberty and Universal Freedom*. The class leader shall write down the important proceedings of every class meeting, in order that it may be reported to the body of the Union, as herein-after directed.

8th. The Class-leaders shall meet the General Committee and Officers at the Union Rooms every Monday evening at 8 o'clock, for the purpose of paying to the general fund their respective class collections; and of reporting the progress of their respective classes in moral and political information; for stating what they consider to be necessary for the further promoting the general object; to receive instructions from, and advise with, the General Committee, respecting the welfare and further promoting the object of the Institution.

9th. That one or more Rooms be opened every Wednesday evening, at half past seven o'clock, for the purpose of

reading such Moral and Political Books, Essays, &c. &c. as the Committee and Conductors shall approve; the reading to commence at eight, and close at ten o'clock. The Conductors to appoint a Chairman for the evening, who shall keep order during the meeting.

10th. That the Rooms shall be open every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings, at 8 o'clock, for the purpose of instructing the Subscribers in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, &c. &c.; when several persons, duly qualified, shall be appointed by the General Committee, to attend each evening as teachers, without fee or reward.

11th. That one or more Rooms shall be opened every Saturday evening at seven o'clock, for reciting such moral and political pieces as the Conductors approve, and the youths, &c. may have committed to memory: to close at 10 o'clock.

12th. That the Rooms shall be open every Sunday from nine until twelve o'clock in the forenoon, and from half past one until four o'clock in the afternoon, for the purpose of teaching youth, of both sexes, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, &c. &c. under the management of Conductors, nominated by the Teachers, and appointed by the General Committee for that purpose.

13th. A Library shall be attached to the Institution, to be purchased out of the general fund of the Union, to which all members shall have free access, in the manner following, viz.—On the evenings appropriated to reading, &c. the Chairman shall order such books, &c. out of the Library as may be necessary for the evening, and then to return them.

14th. The General Committee, or any part thereof, shall have power to visit each and every class at the time of its meeting, for the purpose of rendering all the assistance he or they can, for the promotion of the objects of the Union.

15th. That the two Representatives or Committee-men of each Section, with the Class-leaders of the respective Sections, to form and constitute a Section Committee, to transact all local business, and settle all differences and misunderstandings that may more particularly concern each respective Section. Provided the said Section Committee are not able to decide any case before them, they shall, and they are hereby bound, to report such case or cases to the General Committee, whose decision shall be final.



16th. That as soon as convenient, we intend to depute some good and well-trying citizen, not less than 25 years of age, and resident in the town not less than seven years, as our Representative to London, there to do our business; such as presenting our Petitions and Remonstrances to the Chief Magistrate; and act in conjunction with the Deputies or Representatives that may be deputed and convened from other towns and places in England, Scotland, and Wales, there to remain, until we have obtained *our* Rights as Men and Citizens.

17th. That the said Representative shall be elected annually by ballot, (revocable at any time by his constituents) in the manner following, viz.—four weeks before the expiration of the time of the last Representative, the General Committee shall call a public meeting of the Union, for the nomination of Candidates, duly qualified; and shall then, and they are hereby bound to, deliver the name or names of the several candidates, to each, and every Class-leader of the Union, who shall fully canvas the merits or demerits of each candidate in their respective classes. In 14 days after the names of the several candidates have been proposed to the body of the Union, a meeting shall be called of the whole Union, by the General Committee, for the purpose of electing the Union Representative,—when each member shall write upon a slip of paper the name of the candidate he votes for, and roll it up, then drop it into a box provided for that purpose. The General Committee shall then examine the number of votes for each candidate, and whoever has a majority, shall be publicly declared to be duly elected our Representative for the ensuing year.

18th. That all members of this Union, above eighteen years of age, shall have power to vote for General Committee-men, the Union Representative, &c. &c.

19th. That although it is little to be doubted that the good of his Constituents would ever govern the discretion of a Representative elected and limited as aforesaid, yet, agreeably to the very nature of a deputed authority, the Deputy must be subject, at the pleasure of his Constituents, to receive their instructions.

20th. All Property of the Union shall be entrusted only in the hands of General Committee-men, Trustees, or public servants for the time being, for the management and care of the Union.

21st. Every General Committee-man, Trustee, or other Officer, on going out of the office, shall deliver up his trust,

with a clear and fair statement of all that has been placed in his care, within one month after his going out of office.

22nd. The President and General Committee shall have power to summon defaulters before them, on authenticated complaints being made.

23rd. The President shall have power to call a meeting of the General Committee, on any urgent occasion.

24th. The President and major part of the General Committee shall have power to call a public Meeting of the Union, whenever they deem it necessary; or the President himself, when formally required, by a requisition signed by 25 members of the Union.

25th. Seeing that it is impossible to *Do to others as we would they should do unto us*, whilst the present corruptions in the parliamentary representation of the People shall sap, as they do, all the foundations of public and private morals, each member of this Union must ever feel it to be a moral obligation incumbent on him to attend to the objects thereof; but pre-eminently to promote, by all just means in his power, a radical reform of Parliament, by means of suffrage in all male persons of mature age and sane minds, who have not for any crime forfeited the right—of Parliaments having a duration not exceeding one year, and of Elections by ballot.

26th. That the rules of this institution may be amended as experience shall shew to be necessary: but no alteration shall be made, except by a General Meeting called for consideration of any such proposition or propositions; on which occasion, such proposition or propositions shall be proposed, and may be debated, in that General Meeting; but nothing conclusive thereon shall take effect, until a subsequent General Meeting shall, by adjournment, be held after an interval of fourteen days at the least; when any such amendment or amendments as shall then be agreed on, shall become binding as rules of the Union.

Approved by  
**MAJOR JOHN CARTWRIGHT,**  
 of London.

N. B. All communications to be addressed to the General Committee, Union Rooms, London Place, Stockport.

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